

## Establishing Uniform Dwelling Code Enforcement Fees

By statute, municipalities have authority to establish fees to defray the cost of operating their inspection and enforcement programs. Some municipalities have inquired as to what would be appropriate fees for the enforcement of the Uniform Dwelling Code (UDC). It is very difficult for the department to define with any accuracy the permit fees that should be established by municipalities since situations vary in each municipality. However, this bulletin attempts to explain some of the considerations that should be made by municipalities when establishing enforcement fees for the program.

Among the enforcement responsibilities in the UDC are:

### **A. Plan Review**

Section Comm 20.09 requires that plans be submitted for approval and that such approval shall be conducted by a certified inspector or certified independent agency. Any conditions of approval shall be indicated by a letter or indicated on the permit. For a traditionally built house, we would estimate that plan review should take no longer than one hour and the bulk of that time would be spent in reviewing the erosion control, structural, space design and energy requirements.

### **B. Issuance of Permits**

Upon completion of the plan review, the certified inspector will be issuing a building permit. The municipality may, at its option, issue separate permits for each area of inspection or issue one permit to cover the total building. We would estimate the time period involved for taking the application and issuing the permit, collecting the fees, checking contractor credentials, etc., should not involve more than one-half hour.

### **C. Inspections**

Depending upon the number of inspectors involved and coordination of subcontractors and the construction of the home, it is conceivable to have as few as four inspections or as many as eleven inspections on each dwelling unit. This assumes there are no other re-inspections necessary due to incomplete work or non-complying conditions.

Let's consider a typical situation:

- Normally, depending on foundation design, insulation and soil conditions, separate footing and foundation inspections would be required.
- The electrical utility usually provides power at the jobsite to either a temporary or properly protected permanent service. Before they can connect the power, it must be inspected by the inspector.
- It is practically impossible for all of the construction trades to be coordinated well enough so that all of the rough-in work including construction, plumbing, HVAC and electrical work can be accomplished during one inspection trip. Probably two rough inspections at a minimum are needed, assuming the inspector(s) have multiple certification categories.
- The insulation inspection must be separately inspected so that the rough work may be inspected prior to being covered up by insulation.
- The final or occupancy inspection of all work categories may be done by single inspector that is fully certified in all of the UDC certification categories.

Therefore, a typical inspection schedule may consist of the following:

<b>Inspection No.</b>	<b>Inspection Type</b>	<b>Estimated On-Site Inspection Time</b>
1	Footings	1/4 Hour
2	Foundation	1/4 Hour
3	Electrical Service	1/4 Hour
3	Basement Underfloor	1/4 Hour
4	Construction	1 Hour
4	Plumbing	1/2 Hour
5	HVAC	1/2 Hour
5	Electrical	1/2 Hour
6	Insulation	1/2 Hour
7	Final - all categories	1-1/4 Hour
7 Total Inspections		5-1/4 Hours

Depending on local conditions, construction practices, dwelling size and building design, there may be additional necessary inspection time and additional inspections of the electrical service, sewer and water laterals, underfloor plumbing, and inside drain tiles.

#### **D. Reporting**

After inspections are completed, inspectors must document their files, write noncompliance reports to owners and builders and otherwise communicate with builders, designers, owners and other agencies to determine and ensure code compliance.

#### **E. Travel**

Travel costs can be broken down into the time spent by the inspector driving to and from job sites and the auto expenses in doing so. The more dispersed the jurisdiction, the higher these costs will be. Clustered construction activity will allow a single trip to several projects. Travel was based on an inspector located centrally within the jurisdiction.

#### **F. Administrative/Legal**

In addition to the actual inspector's time, enforcement also requires administrative, clerical and legal staff time.

#### **G. Miscellaneous Overhead**

In support of the inspection program, the following costs must also be considered:

- office space and equipment
- inspector certification fees
- liability insurance
- inspection equipment
- postage and supplies
- leave time

## H. Unassigned Time

In addition to the time spent on a specific chargeable project, inspectors will also usually spend time on:

- code consultation with public
- municipal meetings
- training

Also, if a municipality plans to support their other building, zoning or nuisance control programs through their UDC program fees, then fees will need to be increased correspondingly.

## I. Wisconsin Building Permit Seal

Per s. Comm 20.09(3), enforcing municipalities must collect and send to the Department of Commerce a fee for each new one- or two-family dwelling. A building permit seal is then assigned to each dwelling. This fee supports statewide coordination of the UDC. At the state level, no general tax dollars are spent on UDC enforcement.

### COST ESTIMATES OF UDC ENFORCEMENT:

Assumptions:

Average salaries including benefits: **\$30** per hour

Travel expense reimbursement: **50¢** per mile

<b>Function</b>	<b>Hours</b>	<b>County Enforcement</b>	<b>City/Village Enforcement</b>	<b>Town Enforcement</b>
Plan Review	1	\$30	\$30	\$30
Permit Issuance	1/2	\$15	\$15	\$15
Inspection	5-1/4	\$156	\$156	\$156
Reporting	1	\$30	\$30	\$30
Travel for 7 inspection trips with stops at two different projects producing 3.5 total trips/project:				
• Avg. Distance to Projects	-	(15 miles)	(1 miles)	(3 miles)
• Round Trip Distance	-	(30 miles)	(2 miles)	(6 miles)
• Vehicle Cost (Miles) for 3.5 trips	-	\$53 (105 mi)	\$4 (7 mi)	\$11 (21 mi)
• Travel Speed	-	(50 mi/hr)	(30 mi/hr)	(40 mi/hr)
• Salary Cost (Hours)	varies	\$33 (2.1 hrs)	\$6 (.2 hrs)	\$16 (.53 hrs)
Unassigned Time	2	\$60	\$60	\$60
Admin. & Legal Support	-	\$60	\$60	\$60
Miscellaneous Overhead	-	\$75	\$75	\$75
State Permit Seal	-	\$30	\$30	\$30
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>10+</b>	<b>\$542</b>	<b>\$466</b>	<b>\$483</b>

These fees are presented as flat fees. Municipalities may wish to vary their fees with the size of the dwelling. It is worth noting that often times the same number of inspections are required for projects of differing size but similar design. Also, the above fee estimates are for initial dwelling construction only. Fees also need to be determined for addition and alterations to existing dwellings. A suggested comprehensive fee schedule is available.

**SUGGESTED LOCAL BUILDING PERMIT FEE SCHEDULE FORMAT**

When your municipality has adopted a new fee schedule, please forward a copy for informational purposes to the above address.

Suggested fees are shown as ranges. Your municipality will need to select a specific figure.

**One- and Two-Family Dwellings**

These fees are based on the assumption that a single inspector is fully certified in all four of the Uniform Dwelling Code categories of Construction, Heating, Electrical and Plumbing. If this is not the case, then additional fees may be needed for projects involving several trades and therefore separate visits by different inspectors.

The general intent is to require a single permit application covering all work rather than separate permits for each trade category. Municipalities with contractor trades licensing requirements may wish to use a contractor declaration form to verify licensure.

Municipalities should review their building code ordinance to coordinate it with their fee schedule, especially in terms of scope and permit threshold requirements.

1. New Dwellings
  - \$.\_\_\_\_per square foot.
  - Minimum Fee \$\_\_\_\_\_.
  - Includes all areas such as basements and garages.
  - Combines all trade categories including construction, heating, electrical and plumbing.
2. Finished Additions
  - \$.\_\_\_\_per square foot including basements.
  - Minimum Fee \$\_\_\_\_\_.
  - Combines all trade categories including construction, heating, electrical and plumbing.
3. Major Alterations
  - \$.\_\_\_\_per square foot of rooms involved.
  - Minimum Fee \$\_\_\_\_\_.
  - Covers construction only; additional mechanical fees required.
4. Non-Finished additions, garages, decks, accessory buildings
  - \$.\_\_\_\_per square foot.
  - Minimum Fee \$\_\_\_\_\_.
  - Covers construction only; additional mechanical fees required.
5. Special Projects
  - a. Reroofing \$\_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Residing \$\_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Swimming Pools includes construction, electrical, fencing and deck. \$\_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Other Minor Work \$\_\_\_\_\_

6. Electrical (If not part of a combined project permit)
- a. Service and Feeder Panels
    - ~~\$~~
  - b. New Circuits
    - \$\_\_\_\_\_ per circuit
  - c. Alterations to Existing Cicuits
    - \$\_\_\_\_\_ per opening (lights, switches, outlets)
  - d. Air Conditioner
    - \$\_\_\_\_\_ (includes HVAC)
  - e. Minimum Fee
    - ~~\$~~
7. Plumbing (If not part of a combined project permit)
- a. Per fixture or piece of equipment
    - ~~\$~~
  - b. Lateral inspection
    - ~~\$~~
  - c. Minimum fee
    - ~~\$~~
8. Heating
- a. Heating Equipment, includes electrical work
    - \$\_\_\_\_\_ each
  - b. Water Heater includes electrical and plumbing work
    - ~~\$~~
  - c. Minimum fee
    - ~~\$~~
9. Reinspections beyond normal course of inspections to verify corrections or due to phased construction
- \$\_\_\_\_\_.
10. Late permits - work started before permit issuance
- Additional 50% fee
  - Minimum Fee \$
11. Covering of work before inspection
- ~~\$~~
12. Special Inspections
- \$\_\_\_\_\_ per hour
  - Minimum Fee \$
13. Footing and Foundation (early permit to start)
- ~~\$~~

## Commercial Buildings

If your municipality has principally small commercial projects, then the above one- and two-family fee schedule would also be satisfactory for commercial projects as well. Otherwise, we recommend the following schedule which refers to the State's fee schedule where possible.

1. Construction and HVAC permit fees shall be        % of the most recent State of Wisconsin fee schedule contained in s. Comm 2.31. If plans have been reviewed and approved by the State, fees shall be reduced        % to cover the costs of inspections only.

2. Plumbing permit fees shall be        % of the most recent State of Wisconsin fee schedule contained in s. Comm 2.. If plans have been reviewed and approved by the State, fees shall be reduced        % to cover the costs of inspections only.

3. Electrical permit fees shall be:

- a. Service and Feeder Panels
- b. New Circuits
- c. Alterations to Existing Cicuits
- d. Minimum Fee

- ~~\$~~
- ~~\$~~        per circuit
- ~~\$~~        per opening  
(outlets, switches, lights)
- ~~\$~~

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